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(Theater-
Quaker)
Th

Love and Friendly Advice

T O

Friends and Brethren;

In and about the City of

L O N D O N.

Published by Order and Approbation of
the *Quarterly-Meeting*, held at *Devon-
shire-House*, the 31st Day of the First
Month, 1729.

*Mark the perfect Man, and behold the Upright, for the
End of that Man is Peace. Psal. xxxvii. 37.*

L O N D O N

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E P I S T L E of LOVE, &c.

Dear Friends,

SO long as the Spirit of Christ continues to reign in his Churches, there will be a Care and Concern on the Minds of them, who dwell in it, that all the Members of the Church walk as becomes their Profession, in Holiness of Life and Conversation.

Several Things being laid before this Meeting, relating to the Misconduct and irregular Behaviour of some, under our Name and Profession; We find a Concern at this Time, to give forth the following Exhortation and Advice, and earnestly request, that it may be carefully read, and duly observ'd.

To our Grief we have found, that too many of late amongst us, have not had that due Regard to the Credit and Reputation of their Profession; nor have they been so careful in the Management of their Affairs and Trade in the World, as they ought to have been; but have inconsiderately and un-

advisedly overcharg'd themselves with *Debts*, which they could not duly and justly discharge; and by neglecting their Affairs, and being too extravagant in their Habits, Furniture of their Houses, and living too high, above what their Income would answer, have hurt themselves.

And some have run themselves into great Difficulties, for want of a timely Inspection into their Affairs; and when they have found themselves incapable to answer the just Demands of their Creditors, have put them off with Promises to pay at a certain Time; but yet have not taken due Care to perform them. This Practice has been attended with many bad Consequences, being injurious to themselves, and Occasion of Scandal to our holy Profession.

It is therefore our tender Counsel and Advice, in the Love of God, that every one would weigh and seriously consider these Things, and give themselves Time to examine and thoroughly inspect their Outward as well as Inward Condition and Circumstances; for 'tis said, *Every one that doeth Evil, hateth the Light, neither cometh to the Light, lest his Deeds should be reprov'd. But he that doeth Truth, cometh to the Light, that his Deeds may be made manifest; that they*

they are wrought in God. * Let all therefore be very careful, not to launch out into Trade, nor make Contracts beyond what they can justly and honourably answer, without Injury to others.

And when any under our Profession, fall short in the Duties aforesaid, and it is told to another, let the Friend to whose Knowledge such Misconduct shall come, caution the Friend or Friends, in Brotherly Love, with all Privacy. But if he or they, so dealt with, refuse to hearken to that Friend, let him then take one or two more with him, to the Person or Persons offending, and lay the Case and Nature of the Offence more strongly before them. And if they refuse to hearken to them, then let those Friends acquaint the Monthly Meeting, where the Person or Persons belong, that they may do as in the Wisdom of God they shall see the Case requires.

We also think it advisable, for the better keeping Business and Affairs of Trade in good Order; that every one would inspect Once a Year, or oftner, the State of their Affairs, and manage themselves with Discretion, according as they find them; for some of Us have found by Experience, that

A frequent Examination of our Affairs has prov'd very serviceable.

And if any Friend or Friends find themselves streightned and under Difficulties in their Affairs, 'tis our tender Advice, that they do speedily communicate their Circumstances to a Friend or two for their Advice or Assistance; and let such Friends who are consulted and advis'd with, take Care not to divulge the Matters reveal'd to them, to his or their Prejudice.

And we earnestly entreat the several Monthly Meetings, in the Love of Christ, to watch over all their Members, and stir them up to put in Practice this our Brotherly Advice, for the Honour of God, and Reputation of our Christian Society.

Let all keep themselves clear from injuring others by Trust and Credit given them, or in any other Respect whatsoever.

Let none be lifted up with Pride or vain Glory, to make a Shew of Grandeur and Riches; but keep to the plain Way of Living, and the honest and just Dealing of our Ancients, who thereby gain'd a good Report amongst Men.

Finally, Dear Friends, let none under our Profession give Offence, by their extravagant or evil Conduct, either to Jew
or

or *Gentile*, or to the Church of Christ; for as the True Church is, so we that profess to be her Members, ought to be Holy and without Blemish.

If any through sudden and unexpected adverse Accidents, have fail'd or should fail in paying their just Debts, and afterwards should be of Ability to pay them, It is our earnest Request, that they would see the Advice given in such Cases by the Yearly Meeting, in the Epistles of the Years, 1710, 1724, 1727, and 1728. and answer the same.

And Dear Friends,

We being inform'd, that some who bear our Name and Profession, go to the Play-Houses, (in or about this City) and also practise Gaming, and tho' admonish'd for so doing, yet instead of condemning, have rather justify'd themselves in such Practices.

Now the taking such a Liberty, being contrary to the Practice and Advice of our Ancient Friends, and Us as a People, we could not but be sorrowfully affected at the Hearing of it, as well for the Sake of them who are in such Practices, as for the Youth amongst us, who are liable by their Examples to be led into the same.

From these Considerations, we thought it very needful and incumbent on us at this Time to declare, that it is our Sense and Judgment, that the Practice of going to the Play-Houses or Gaming, is contrary to the Doctrine and Practice of Christ and his Apostles, and contrary to the Practice of other holy Men and Women, our Patterns, mention'd in the Scriptures.

What Pretences soever some amongst us in our Days, may have for going to Plays, we very well know, that not many Years since, hardly any one of our Profession would have been seen at Plays, unless to have bore Testimony against the Vanity, Ill-tendency and Corruption of them: And by the great Complaints which have been Publickly made against some Plays lately acted in this City, we have sufficient Grounds to think, they are no better than Nurseries of Vice and Folly, to say no worse of them.

How destructive therefore must the Practice of going to such Plays be to the Purity of Religion! How contrary to that Holiness and Strictness of Morals enjoyn'd us by our blessed Lord! who says, *Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect.** What can Comedies

* Matth. v. 48.

dies and *Tragedies*, or the Representations of the *Ridiculous* Follies, and *Violent* Passions of Men and Women do, to the implanting in the Soul *Divine Love*, *Joy*, *Meekness*, *Humility*, *Self-denyal*, and other *Graces* peculiar to Christianity? No, we are well assur'd, these *Virtues*, these *Graces*, are no where to be learn'd but in the *School* of Christ, the *Heart* of every true Disciple and Follower of the Humble and Self-denying Jesus; who said to his Disciples, *If any Man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his Cross, and follow me.* §

We having therefore every one of us, the best of Teachers at home, if we will but hearken to his Instructions, what need have any amongst us to go to the Play-Houses to be instructed? Is *Honesty* and *Probity*, the *Bands of Civil Society*, (for which our ancient Friends were so noted) to be learnt at Plays? Is *Modesty*, that *Grace of the Sex*, to be improv'd by seeing Plays, and hearing the Songs and Speeches of the wanton Actors and Actresses? No, we think these Things are better preserv'd by a constant dwelling in the Fear of the Lord; by a strict Watch over our selves; by a due Regard to the Duties of Religion in the Wor-

ship

ship of God; and by refraining, as much as we can, from all Company, whose *Conversation is not as it becometh the Gospel of Christ.* *

Where shall we find greater Examples of *generous Love*, and of a noble and truly *Heroic Spirit*, than in the Apostles and primitive Christians; who gave up their Lives, and every Thing that was Near and Dear to them in this World, for the Sakes and Good of others; travelling into distant Countries, through great Jeopardy and Hardships, to spread the Gospel of Christ, which brought *Life and Immortality* to Light? † By their Zeal, their Love and Labours, many Thousands were turn'd from *Darkness to Light*, from the *Power of Satan unto God*; from *serving dumb Idols*, to *worship the living God*; || from great *Immoralities*, to a State of Purity and Holiness. §

It was by imitating and following these Examples, these Holy Patterns, that our Ancient Friends and Brethren (some of whose Heads are but lately laid in the *Grave*) gain'd a good Report amongst Men; and many, by their honest and just Dealings, holy and industrious Lives, acquir'd that
Wealth

* 2 Phil. i. 27. † Acts xxvi. 28, || 1 Cor. xii. 2. ¶ 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10, 11.

Wealth which their Children now enjoy
 And shall any of these do Despite to their
 Father's Memory, slight their good Coun-
 sel, and act in their Lives and Conversati-
 ons quite contrary to them; in wasting
 their precious Time and Substance, by go-
 ing to Plays, and other the like Places of
 Diversion? Oh this is our Trouble! This
 is what greatly affects us!

But if after *due* Exhortation and Labour
 in Love, any under our Name and Pro-
 fession shall continue in those Practices, we
 shall be constrain'd to declare, we have no
 Unity or Fellowship with them therein, but
 testify against such their disorderly walking.

Robert Barclay in his *Apology* saith, *Prop.*
 xv. ' There is no Duty more frequently
 ' commanded, nor more incumbent upon
 ' Christians, than the *Fear of the Lord*, to
 ' stand in awe before him, to walk as in his
 ' Presence; but if such, as use these Games
 ' and Sports, will speak from their Con-
 ' sciences, they can (I doubt not) experi-
 ' mentally declare, That this *Fear* is for-
 ' gotten in their Gaming: And if God by
 ' his *Light* secretly touch them, or mind
 ' them of the *Vanity* of their Way, they
 ' strive to shut it out, and use their Ga-
 ' ming, as an Engine to put away from
 ' them

' them that troublesome Guest; and thus
 ' make merry over the *Just One*, whom they
 ' have slain and crucified in themselves. But
 ' further, if Christ's Reasoning be to be
 ' heeded, who saith, *That the good Man,*
 ' out of the good *Treasure of the Heart*, bring-
 ' eth forth good Things; and an *Evil Man,*
 ' out of the *Evil Treasure*, bringeth forth evil
 ' Things: And that of every idle Word we
 ' shall give an Account in the Day of Judg-
 ' ment: * It may be easily gathered, from
 ' what *Treasure* these Inventions come;
 ' and it may be easily proved, that it is
 ' from the *Evil*, and not the *Good*. How
 ' many idle Words do they necessarily pro-
 ' duce? Yea, what are *Comedies* but a stu-
 ' died Complex of idle and lying Words? Let
 ' Men, that believe their Souls are *Immor-*
 ' tal, and that there will be a Day of Judg-
 ' ment, in which these Words of Christ will
 ' be accomplish'd, answer me, how all
 ' these will make Account in that great
 ' and terrible Day, of all these idle Words,
 ' that are necessarily made Use of, about
 ' Dancing, Gaming, Carding, and Comedies
 ' acting?

William Penn in his *No Cross, No Crown*,
 Chap. xv. saith, ' Surely, those who are
 to

* Matth. xii. 35, 36.

‘ to reckon for every *idle Word*, * must not
 ‘ use Sports to pass away their Time, which
 ‘ they are commanded so diligently to re-
 ‘ deem; considering no less Work is to
 ‘ be done than making their *Calling* and
 ‘ *Election sure*; † much less study Recrea-
 ‘ tions to their vain Minds, and spend the
 ‘ greatest Part of their Days, Months and
 ‘ Yearstherein, not allowing a quarter of
 ‘ that Time towards the great Concern-
 ‘ ment of their Lives and Souls, for which
 ‘ that Time was given them.‡

‘ There’s but little Need to drive away
 ‘ that by foolish Divertisements, which
 ‘ flies away so swiftly of it self; and when
 ‘ once gone, is never to be recalled. *Plays*,
 ‘ *Parks*, *Balls*, *Treats*, *Romances*, *Musick*,
 ‘ *Love-Sonnets*, and the like, will be a very
 ‘ invalid Plea for any other Purpose than
 ‘ their Condemnation (who are taken, and
 ‘ delighted with them) *at the Revelation of*
 ‘ *the Righteous Judgment of God*. O my
 ‘ Friends! these were never invented, but
 ‘ by the Mind, which had first lost the
 ‘ Joy and *ravishing Delights of God’s holy*
 ‘ *Presence*.

‘ But

* Mat. xii. 36. † Eph. v. 15, 16. ‡ Phil. iii. 14, 15.
 2 Pet. ii. 10. Col. iv. 5.

' But certainly it is a Sign of universal
 ' Impiety, in a Land, when not to be guil-
 ' ty of Sins the very *Heathens* loath, is to
 ' be Virtuous, yes, and *Christian* too, and
 ' that to no small degree of Reputation: A
 ' dismal Symptom to a Country! But is
 ' it not to be greatly blinded, that those we
 ' call *Infidels*, should detest those Practi-
 ' ces as infamous, which People, that call
 ' themselves *Christians*, cannot or will not
 ' see to be such, but gild them over with
 ' the fair Titles of *Ornaments*, *Decency*, *Re-*
 ' *creation*, and the like? Well, *my Friends*,
 ' if there were no God, no Heaven, no
 ' Hell, no holy Examples, no *Jesus Christ*,
 ' in Cross, Doctrine, and Life, to be
 ' conform'd unto, yet would *Charity*
 ' to the Poor, Help to the Needy, Peace
 ' amongst Neighbours, Visits to the Sick,
 ' Care of the Widow and Fatherless, with
 ' the rest of those temporal good Offices
 ' already repeated, be a Nobler Employment,
 ' and much more worthy of your Expen-
 ' ce and Pains. Nor indeed is it to be con-
 ' ceived, that the Way to Glory is smooth'd
 ' with such Variety of Carnal Pleasures;
 ' for then Conviction, a wounded Spirit, a
 ' Broken Heart, a Regenerate Mind, in a
 ' Word, Immortality, would prove as meer
 ' Fictions

‘ *Fictions*, as some make them, and others
 ‘ therefore think them ; No, these Practi-
 ‘ ces are for ever to be extinguish’d and
 ‘ expell’d all Christian-Society. For I af-
 ‘ firm, that to one, who internally knows
 ‘ God, and hath a Sense of his blessed Pre-
 ‘ sence, all such *Recreations* are *Death*, yea
 ‘ more dangerously Evil, and more apt to
 ‘ steal away the Mind from the *heavenly*
 ‘ *Exercise*, than grosser Impieties. For they
 ‘ are so big, they are plainly seen ; so dir-
 ‘ ty, they are easily detected ; which Edu-
 ‘ cation and common Temperance, as well
 ‘ as Constitution in many, teach them to
 ‘ abhor ; and if they should be committed,
 ‘ they carry with them a proportionable
 ‘ Conviction. But these pretended *Inno-*
 ‘ *cents*, these supposed *harmless Satisfaction*s,
 ‘ are more *Surprizing*, more *Destructive* ;
 ‘ for as they easily gain an Admission by
 ‘ the Senses, so the more they pretend to
 ‘ *Innocency*, the more they secure the
 ‘ Minds of People in the *common Use* of
 ‘ them ; till they become so *insensible* of
 ‘ their Evil *Consequences*, that with a migh-
 ‘ ty Confidence they can plead for them.

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